

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 CAB-02 COME-00

DOT-00 EB-07 FAA-00 /082 W
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R 071000Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9512

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 2970

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK, AF

SUBJ: INDO-PAK RELATIONS

REFS: A. STATE 76968

B. NEW DELHI 4422

C. ISLAMABAD 2492

SUMMARY: MFA OFFICIAL EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH CONCILIATORY TONE OF PM GANDHI'S REPLY TO BHUTTO BUT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HER RECENTLY REPORTED REMARK CALLING ON PAKS TO MAKE PEACE WITH BALUCH AND PAKHTUNS. MFA IS AWAITING WORD FROM GOI ABOUT SCHEDULING OF CIVIL AIR TALKS; IT IS PLEASED WITH FURTHER STEP TOWARD NORMALIZATION REPRESENTED BY INDO-PAK AGREEMENT ON TRANSPORT OF PAK COTTON TO INDIA. PAKS ARE MAKING NO FURTHER MOVES ON RESTORATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BUT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED WERE INDIANS TO RAISE MATTER WHEN AGHA SHAHI LEADS GOP DELEGATION TO DELHI FOR AIR NEGOTIATIONS.

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END SUMMARY.

1. DIRECTOR GENERAL (SOUTH ASIA) HAYAT MEHDI GAVE POL COUNSELOR MFA'S READING OF CURRENT STATE OF PLAY IN INDO-PAK RELATIONS DURING SESSION AT MINISTRY APRIL 5.

2. PRIME MINISTER GANDHI'S MESSAGE. MEHDI EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH GANDHI REPLY TO BHUTTO MARCH 25 LETTER, RECEIVED HERE LAST WEEK, DESCRIBING IT AS CONCILIATORY IN TONE. HE SAID THAT LETTER CONTAINED A COUPLE OF QUERULOUS REMARKS--HE DID NOT OFFER ANY DETAILS--BUT NOTED THAT THESE HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED AND WERE NOT CONSIDERED IMPORTANT. BHUTTO ANSWER WAS NOW IN FINAL STAGES OF PREPARATION AND WOULD REACH NEW DELHI SHORTLY. MEHDI SAID THAT IT TOO WOULD BE CONCILIATORY.

3. GANDHI STATEMENT. AT SAME TIME, MEHDI DID EXPRESS SOME CONCERN OVER POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMENT MRS. GANDHI REPORTEDLY MADE IN NEW DELHI ON APRIL 2 AND PICKED UP HERE FROM ALL INDIA RADIOM ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, MRS. GANDHI TOLD MEETING OF INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MASS COMMUNICATION THAT "IT IS FOR PAKISTAN TO MAKE PEACE WITH BALUCH AND PAKHTUNS". (MFA SPOKESMAN HAD ON APRIL 3 TAKEN EXCEPTION TO REMARK, WHICH HE CALLED COMMENT ON A MATTER THAT WAS PURELY AN INTERNAL AFFAIR OF PAKISTAN, AND HAD SAID THAT GOP'S CONCERN HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO GOI. TWO LEADING URDU DAILIES ALSO RAN STRONG EDITORIALS DENOUNCING IT.) MEHDI SAID HE WAS NOT SURE WHETHER TO DISMISS THE COMMENT AS INCONSEQUENTIAL--HE MAY HAVE HAD IN MIND SOME OF HIS OWN PRIME MINISTER'S STUMP SPEECHES--ORWHETHER TO READ IT, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S GO AHEAD TO THE UNHCR TO LOOK INTO THE REFUGEE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN (REF A) AS EVIDENCE OF GOI INTENTION TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN THE BALUCH/PATHAN ISSUE. HE SAID THAT IN LIGHT OF THE PATTERN OF 1971 INDIAN MOVES IN EAST BENGAL, WHICH HAD FOCUSED ON THE REFUGEE PROBLEM, ONLY PRUDENT GOP COURSE WAS TO LOOK VERY CLOSELY AT

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THE POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GANDHI REMARK'S COMING SO SOON AFTER WALDHEIM'S DECISION. (FOR NEW DELHI: WE WOULD BE MOST INTERESTED TO HAVE YOUR READING OF REPORTED STATEMENT).

4. CIVIL AIR TALKS. MEHDI SAID GOP WAS AWAITING WORD FROM INDIANS ABOUT SCHEDULING OF CIVIL AIR TALKS. INDIANS HAD BEEN MADE AWARE THAT PAKS WERE PREPARED

TO COME TO DELHI FOR THESE TALKS, AND GOP DID NOT INTEND TO TAKE ANY FURTHER INITIATIVE PENDING GOI REPLY. MEHDI WAS HOPEFUL KEWAL SINGH AND OTHERS WOULD BE ABLE TO FIT TALKS IN THIS MONTH. HE SEEMED UNAWARE OF PROBLEMS MENTIONED IN REF B, AND POL COUNSELOR DID NOT CALL THESE TO HIS ATTENTION.

5. PROPAGANDA. MEHDI HAD COMPLETED HIS SURVEY OF ALLEGED PAK PROPAGANDA BROUGHT TO GOP'S NOTICE BY INDIANS (REF C) AND HAS CONCLUDED THAT WITH THE ONE EXCEPTION HE HAD MENTIONED TO POL COUNSELOR EARLIER, PAK STATEMENTS WERE REITERATIONS OF STANDARD GOP POSITIONS. PAKS HAD REPORTED THIS TO INDIANS AND HAD ALSO SENT TO GOI EVIDENCE THEY HAD DEVELOPED OF UNJUSTIFIED INDIAN PROPAGANDA. MEHDI COMMENTED THAT GOI PROPAGANDA LEVEL HAD CONTINUED TO DROP OFF, AND HE SEEMED HAPPY TO LET THIS CONTENTIOUS ISSUE DROP.

6. MAHDI EXPRESSED SATISFACTION OVER INDO-PAK AGREEMENT ON TRANSPORT OF PAK COTTON TO INDIAN PORTS, COMMENTING THAT EVERY STEP TOWARD NORMALIZATION IS WELCOME. HE REPEATED HIS HOPE THAT CIVIL AIR AGREEMENT WOULD FOLLOW. ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, HE SAID NEXT STEP WAS UP TO GOI BUT HINTED THAT PAKS WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED WERE INDIANS TO RAISE MATTER WHEN AGHA SHAHI LEADS GOP DELEGATION TO DELHI FOR AIR NEGOTIATIONS.
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